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7 April 1950

SUBJECT: Content and Distribution of the CIA Daily Summary

1. During the past eighteen months the Department of State has given signs of an increasing uneasiness over the content and distribution of the CIA Daily Summary. This uneasiness was reflected in the Dulles Report, in comments on CIA's "political summaries", and it has found frequent expression in the day-to-day liaison between the Publications Division of ORE and the Policy Reports Staff of the Office of the Secretary, the unit which makes "S/S" cables available to CIA. Mr. Robert G. Barnes, Chief of the Policy Reports Staff, requested on 1 March 1950 that he be provided with a current list of the Daily Summary distribution, a request which was immediately granted. In subsequent conversations with him, it has been learned that the Department of State is still seriously concerned over the content and distribution of the Daily Summary.

2. Content of the CIA Daily Summary. The Daily Summary was established at the direct request of the President who wanted to read brief digests of the most significant telegrams and cables received daily by CIA. It was made specifically clear that operational cables were to be included, so long as they bore some significant relationship to national security and needed therefore to be brought to the President's attention. This concept has remained a guiding one for those responsible for publishing the Daily Summary, the sole modification being that the National Security Council is now regarded as also being a prime target for the publication. However, it has been true from the beginning that the Daily Summary has consisted almost entirely of digests of State Department telegrams, the percentage of State materials usually running well over 90 per cent. Although it is clear that in peacetime the most significant problems will usually come within the purview of the Department of State, the extraordinarily high percentage of State items in the Daily Summary is also owing to the withholding of high-level materials by the various agencies of the National Defense establishment -- particularly operational cables -- on the one hand, and the consistent distribution of such materials by State on the other. The combination of these two factors has caused the content of the CIA Daily Summary to consist almost exclusively of high level State Department operational and intelligence cables.

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3. Distribution of the CIA Daily Summary. Analysis of the distribution of the Daily Summary discloses that 26 of the 31 copies distributed externally go to some part of the National Defense establishment. This imbalance is caused by: (a) the four-to-one ratio between the Defense agencies and the Department of State; (b) the interest of the Defense agencies in learning, through the Daily Summary, about the plans and operations of the State Department; and (c) the disinterest of State in reading a publication which consists 90 per cent of its own materials. Whatever its causes, however, this imbalance means that the Daily Summary has become a one-way channel by which State Department's most sensitive information and operational planning is made available to the Defense agencies, without reciprocation by those agencies. From State's point of view, CIA's profession that the Daily Summary is designed primarily for the President and the NSC is overshadowed by the fact that the distribution of the publication is predominantly to the military.

4. The present concern of the Department of State would be considerably relieved, if not entirely dispelled, if Army, Navy, and Air were to make available for the CIA Daily Summary, cables and telegrams of a sensitivity equal to those provided by State. Under such circumstances the content of the Daily Summary would more accurately reflect daily cable traffic which relates significantly to the security of the US. Moreover, under such circumstances the Department of State would undoubtedly ask for more copies of the Daily Summary, thus adjusting the imbalance of the present distribution.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that COAPS

1. Acquaint the military agencies with the intelligence needs of CIA in connection with the Daily Summary.
2. Inform the military agencies of the degree and kind of State Department contributions to the Daily Summary.
3. Advise the military agencies of the possibility that CIA may be forced to curtail distribution of the Daily Summary to those agencies in order to protect its position with the Department of State unless they are able to provide CIA with equally sensitive materials.

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